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Music

provided a complete set of printed Chris D. lyrics, and these are interesting: mostly about obscure nightmares, Catholic fear and white guilt. But they are written with little apparent regard for rational meaning ("A horned palm stretches out greeting/ pulls a boy and girl behind the 8 ball"), and phrasing is usually random — streams of lyrics being shouted out with whatever inflection happens to fit the melody. Only at times are the words surprisingly expressive ("Swept down a river of fever/ I'm caught in the coldest current/ Real goes to false in the space of a breath/ Fever turns to ice in a river cold as life").

After repeated listening, some songs get stuck in your head. The line "See you in the boneyard," although phrased a bit awkwardly, is followed ironically by a reinterpreted Goffin-King line ("Where she hit me and it felt like a kiss"), which is in turn quickly dispatched by one of Dave Alvin's wild guitar licks. And a lot of the metal riffs are fun to sing through clenched teeth and pursed lips. One song, "Cyrano de Berger's Back," by far the most lighthearted and enjoyable on the album, would probably make good radio.

But overall this is a concept album about devils and purgatory and illness and pain. It is not meant to be pretty or fun or to provide AM hits. It has been suggested that this is a soundtrack for personal exorcism, and that appears to be the intent. But finally it doesn't make it. The vocals are just too contrived.

This band is in many ways similar to Claude Bessy's Catholic Discipline. That band, too, was composed of local celeb musicians who made nifty music to accompany a Slash person singing discordantly about fear and guilt. (Catholicism is very *in* these days.) Predictably, that band went nowhere. Off-key singing and screaming is fine, in moderation — rock and roll and the blues wouldn't be what they are without some transitory flat notes and a little roughness for passion — but unrelieved off-key singing and unwavering wailing are monotonous and tiring to the ear.

So why was this record made? Why have some of the city's finest musicians contributed to something so potentially disastrous? A sense of adventure, perhaps, or maybe an insight into Chris D.'s tormented vocal style that the rest of us don't see. The Flesh Eaters and Ruby Records might be dismissable as a bunch of misguided fools, or they could be the L.A. music community's most imaginative visionaries. Time will tell. Either way, I don't think they'll be convincing a lot of record buyers and radio listeners.

Better horrorshow rock, with the all-important element of wit that the Flesh Eaters mostly ignore, is being done by the Cramps, who have the good sense not to take themselves too seriously. More subtle and realistic journeys through Hell have been recorded and performed live by Pere Ubu. The Flesh Eaters have a lot going for them, including good musicianship and good hep metal songs about pain and death, but then so does the Jim Carroll Band. Just like New York's Catholic boy, L.A.'s can't sing, and unfortunately for the Flesh Eaters and this city, that makes all the difference in the world.■

L.A.'s Top 30

(Compiled specifically for the *L.A. Weekly* by **Musicvision** under the supervision of Lenny Beer. The *L.A. Weekly* chart is based on actual sales reports from the major record chains in L.A., the only such chart available.)

Position This Week	Position Last Week		
1.	1	***High Infidelity***	REO Speedwagon (Epic)
2.	2	***Paradise Theater***	Styx (A&M)
3.	3	***Extended Play****	Pretenders (Sire)
4.	4	***Dirty Deeds***	AC/DC (Atlantic)
• 5.	18	***Street Songs***	Rick James (Gordy)
6.	5	***Moving Pictures***	Rush (Mercury)
• 7.	10	***Mistaken Identity***	Kim Carnes (EMI)
8.	6	***Winelight***	Grover Washington, Jr. (Elektra)
9.	11	***Back in Black***	AC/DC (Atlantic)
10.	7	***The Jazz Singer***	Neil Diamond (Capitol)
11.	8	***Face Dances***	Who (WB)
12.	12	***The Dude***	Quincy Jones (A&M)
13.	13	***Double Fantasy***	John Lennon/Yoko Ono (Geffen)
14.	14	***Kings of the Wild Frontier****	Adam and the Ants (Epic)
• 15.	20	***What'cha Gonna Do for Me?***	Chaka Khan (WB)
16.	17	***Arc of a Diver***	Steve Winwood (Island)
• 17.	21	***Loverboy***	Loverboy (Columbia)
18.	9	***Crimes of Passion***	Pat Benatar (Chrysalis)
19.	19	***Zenyatta Mondatta****	Police (A&M)
20.	15	***Zebop***	Santana (Columbia)
21.	22	***Three for Love***	Shalimar (Solar)
22.	23	***A Woman Needs Love***	Ray Parker (Arista)
23.	26	***Greatest Hits***	Kenny Rogers (EMI)
24.	28	***Nightwalker***	Gino Vannelli (Arista)
25.	24	***Devo Live****	Devo (WB)
• 26.	–	***Blizzard of Oz***	Ozzie Osbourne (Jet)
27.	25	***Being with You***	Smokie Robinson (Tamla)
28.	27	***Autoamerican****	Blondie (Chrysalis)
29.	16	***Gap Band III***	Gap Band (Mercury)
30.	29	***Rit***	Lee Ritenour (Elektra)

Soon to hit the charts:
Stephanie Stephanie Mills (20th Century)

• A bullet before the title indicates a strong upward surge in sales and upward movement in the charts.

New Wave Chart

The following are the best-selling New Wave records in the L.A. area *other than* those LPs which have made the Top 30 chart. (Compiled by the *L.A. Weekly* staff.)

1. ***TSOL*** (LP) TSOL (Posh Boy)
2. ***Adolescents*** (LP) Adolescents (Frontier)
3. ***It's a Condition*** (LP) Romeo Void (415)
4. ***Flowers of Romance*** (LP) Public Image, Ltd. (WB)
5. ***Psychedelic Jungle*** (LP) Cramps (IRS)
6. ***New Toy*** (45) Lene Lovich (Stiff/Epic)
7. ***I Know What Boys Like*** (45) Waitresses (Ansteo)
8. ***The Decline of Western Civilization*** (LP) Soundtrack album (Slash)
9. ***The Up Another Octave Records Transmission*** (LP) Various Artists (Up Another Octave)
10. ***Everyone to Their Own*** (LP) A Certain Ratio (Factory)

A small spat over the VEIL nights between HENRY and JOSEPH of VINYL FETISH (which just moved to a large store on Melrose Avenue) and the people who run CATHAY DE GRANDE has finally been resolved. Seems the Cathay people were not too keen on the membership idea, feeling it would discourage business, while J. and H. were adamant about doing things their way, which meant keeping the club from becoming a "frat's nest." ("Pirate's cove" is an altogether different matter.) J. and H. got a copyright on the Veil name, and the Cathay people, not wanting to lose their biggest attraction, quickly made peace.

Speaking of pirates, by sublime coincidence a pizza restaurant on Hollywood Boulevard called the PIRATE is going to start having a — you guessed it — new romantic night. But initial reports say there is more likely to be TALKING HEADS rather than current chic trendsetters SPANDAU BALLET on the turntables. Last bit of new romantic this week: Though the first night of the Veil at FLIPPER'S was somewhat low in attendance, an interesting new theatrical trio, INTERPOL, played. The singer FAYETTE was once a performer in the notorious San Francisco stage group the COCKETTES, and the keyboard player is JEFF MacGREGOR, once a member of the SCREAMERS.

Jeff MacGregor was also one of the sacrificial Christians thrown into the lion's den at the recent WHISKY ACOUSTIC NIGHT. Seems the name of the CIRCLE JERKS on the bill attracted a lot of illiterate types, who, besides not knowing what "acoustic" meant, also mistook performer GEZA X's name for that of defunct Brit band GENERATION X! The show was suitably marred for many by the precocious nasties booing and finger saluting, intimidating every brave stalwart who appeared with steel string and folk song. Among the nobles who braved the vicious throng were: CARLOS GUITARLOS, TOP JIMMY, TITO LARRIVA, JEFFREY LEA PIERCE, yours truly and MAUCOL SINATRA, who really got his share of the abuse for daring to appear before the skinhead yoo-hoos in white Romantic gear. But headliner PHRANC met the test and passed with flying colors, inspiring the skinnies to do renditions of "Felix the Cat" between her songs about fascism and women newscasters. The next folk/acoustic/talent night should be extremely interesting: among those who may be performing are BILLY ZOOM from X, CHARLOTTE from the GOGOS and former GERM PAT SMEAR doing BEATLES songs. Let's hope the kids that go next time know what kind show they're paying for.

Saturday was Surf Day at DISNEYLAND with the VENTURES, JAN AND DEAN and the SURFARIS playing. Amongst those who trekked to Anaheim were the staff of FLIPSIDE FANZINE and members aof 45 GRAVE, the GUN CLUB, the BONEHEADS and other punkeroos. But even though head cheese KID CONGO got in, fellow CRAMPS IVY and LUX were denied admission as were several other new youth. Once again, the dread Disney dress code was being used to discriminate against those people who might tend to think and dress for themselves. Ironically, the last people to have major problems with Disney fashion do's and don'ts were those considered the antithesis of the new movement: hippies. Times change and remain the same, don't they?...

Lots of movie action going on, as should befit Hollywood. Paramount is doing an updated satire of "DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE." Being contemporary, it has to have its token punk scene, and amongst the trendies appearing as extras are K.K., DINAH CANCER, TIFFANY KENNEDY, CHRIS TRENT and local screenster DAVE, the guy with the stick-up hair and fashionable bone jewelry. Seems like a string of bones around the neck is going to replace puka shells as the next big fashion fad.

PAUL MORRISSEY, a former associate of ANDY WARHOL, has completed photography on his film, which heavily satirizes the new wave, and is busily editing it in hopes of debuting the movie at the next CANNES FILM FESTIVAL. Among the music folks who were filmed were PHRANC, the BONEHEADS, BUTCH and the MENTORS. LEROY of UGH AHH OOO also has a part in the film. And on the underground level, a short feature by JAMES VALENTINE should be completed soon. Called "DATE WITH JACK," it is a new interpretation of CHAPAQUIDDICK and amongs the groups doing music for the soundtrack are U.X.A.

Speaking of U.X.A., the socio-political punk group has reformed in New York after lead singer DEE DETROIT's solo career failed to catch fire in LA. Also the band's album, *Illusions of Grandeur* has been re-released with a real cover and a better sound mix. The band hopes to play in El Lay soon.

Another movie recently seen was a Super 8 opus on the DEAD KENNEDYS by ELECTRA FLASH. The film has scenes with RODNEY BINGENHEIMER, NEOLA, DARBY CRASH and NERVOUS GENDER, as well as some hilarious footage of the D.K.s at last year's fiasco FLIPPER'S show. Seeing lead singer JELLO BIAFRA stagebound, not daring to jump into the midst of roller-skating new wavers is truly hilarious.

Last weekend singer DAVID WILEY of HUMAN HANDS held a birthday celebration in an East Hollywood Park. The Hands have a one-off single deal with I.R.S. and their record will be coming out shortly, as will another single by underrated group the B'PEOPLE. MONITOR might also be doing a single with the Copeland Bros. label, though in the meantime they are planning to release two of their more commercial songs, "Surfadelic" and "Junie" under the name the TIKIS. Monitor guitarist MICHAEL UHLENKOTT might get the nod to do the artwork on the cover of the upcoming "URGGH" movie soundtrack album. It would be nice to see some new blood get a chance.

photo by Deborah Schow

Folksinger Geza X

Speaking of blood, cathartic-a-go-go performer JOHANNA WENT has a new single, "Slave Beyond the Grave" — the perfect answer to what to play at a party when you want the dancing to stop and the phonies to go home.

The BLASTERS, fresh from an East Coast minitour, will be playing Thursday at the WHISKY with ROY BROWN, an original R&B great, before taking off to embark on a tour of the South. Don't miss this one. It's sure to be hot and it'll be the last chance for you to see the Blasters, for awhile at least.

DANIEL, sound and doorman from the O.N. KLUB, is putting together a combo called SKA CHA-CHA, who'll be playing (you guessed it) ska music. They're looking for a bass player, preferably someone who's played ska or reggae before. If you're interested, call Daniel at 665-1286.

PAUL ROESSLER of SCREAMERS and NINA HAGEN fame and ex-GERM PAT SMEAR are working with a new band called TWISTED ROOTS. KIRA from SEX SICK is playing bass, and they have a 15-year-old drummer and a dreadlocked MAGGIE on vocals. "We're trying to be like the BEATLES," Roessler says. "That's Pat's latest influence. We want to be the vicious Beatles." Twisted Roots should be making their debut soon.

A compilation album to commemorate the closing of San Francisco's SAVOY TIVOLI will be released toward the end of May and will include some tracks by L.A.'s CIPHER. Independently produced by GO PRODUCTIONS, the album will be called "SAVOY SOUND — WAVE GOODBYE." Also featured on the recording are TUXEDOMOON, the SLEEPERS, SNAKEFINGER, ULTRASHEEN, EARL ZERO and CHAS McMAHON playing the didjeridu, an Australian aboriginal instrument.

San Diego's UNKNOWNS will be recording a six-song EP for BOMP. The unusual and fiery pop band will be working with LIAM STERNBERG (RACHEL SWEET's producer) on the record.

And from still other regions of our glorious state, the UP ANOTHER OCTAVE RECORDS' TRANSMISSION album is selling very well in Orange County and is receiving tons of airplay on KNAC in Long Beach. The record is a sampler album of Orange County bands — of the non-Boys in Skirts variety — who, according to the album's creator, JON LEE, have almost nowhere to play, with the CUCKOO'S NEST and ICHABOD'S being closed. The compilation features a track each by the BARBIES (who did "Operator, Operator"), the ever-popular NU-BEAMS, and Orange County's premier synthesizer band NULL AND VOID. It is available at VINYL FETISH and RHINO, and the price is right: UNDER TWO BUCKS.

And last, MARS REHEARSAL STUDIO, located right here on our planet announced new manager DAVID LAWRENCE, and DANIEL WEST takes over P.R. duties. The studio celebrates its third anniversary in May with the NAUGHTY SWEETIES performing.

—Craig Lee,
Pleasant Gehman
and Bruce Rhodewalt

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